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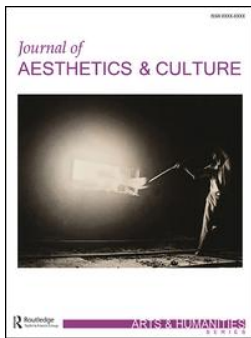
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(Post-)Migration in the age of globalisation: new challenges to imagination and representation

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ABSTRACT

In their introduction to this special issue, the editors first outline the overall thematic content of the issue. The editors suggest that art, culture, and aesthetics have an important role to play with respect to the intensified migration and globalisation that characterise the world today, because globalisation and migration present new and encompassing challenges to imagination and representation, as well as challenging the creation of images (in a broad sense), which is so essential to both individual and collective worldmaking. They move on to present two historical examples from Britain and Germany, respectively, in order to establish a pre-history of the contemporary conditions and developments. After discussing some of the key concepts and theoretical discourses central to the theme and the articles of this special issue of *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*—migration, postmigration, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, worldmaking and belonging—they conclude with brief introductions to the individual contributions.



KEYWORDS

multiculturalism; migration; postmigration; cosmopolitanism; worldmaking; belonging

Recent global developments have infused a new sense of urgency into Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller's statement from 1993 that we live in "the age of migration".¹ Work-related migration, forced migration and, in particular, the movements of refugees as a result of ongoing wars, civil conflicts, and ecological crises have probably never been more extensive, and, when seen from a European perspective, more conspicuous. The "refugee crisis", as it was labelled in Europe in 2015, has made some of the global movements of people highly visible both inside and outside of the heavily guarded borders of the European Union. In light of the disastrous refugee crisis in and around war-torn Syria, the spread of Islamist terrorism, the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments in post-Brexit Britain, and the spread of nationalist populism and protectionism across most of the Western world, it is not surprising that mass migration and its consequences have become political issues of great urgency, both in and beyond the West. Concurrent with these historical events, the humanities and the social sciences have paid increasing attention to the transformative impact of migration on contemporary and future societies, and to the fact that migration involves not only people, but also cultures, religions, information, and resources in the form of goods, skills, media products, art, ideas, and so on. This global complexity, and the greatly improved preconditions for cultural transfer enabled

by new technologies of transportation and mediation, have put traditional notions of art and culture as emerging from confined national and cultural contexts under increasing pressure. Today, the nation-state as the privileged unit of analysis, defined solely from within, is widely contested, and there is an increasing awareness of how "a narrative of its unique achievements, past and present, is transmitted through disciplines and institutions—the university, the museum and the heritage industry".² Historical units, borders, and boundaries cannot be taken as givens but must be subject to investigation and rethought with a view to connectivity and exchange between people and cultures. In fact, notions of "difference" and "otherness" are produced through interactions and relations between people, not in isolation—although the common notions of distinct "national identities", "parallel communities", and "ethnic minorities" might suggest otherwise.

Furthermore, in the most recent studies, migration is no longer perceived as an abnormality or exception but rather as an integral or naturalised part of everyday life, which has influenced—and will continue to influence—most societies around the globe, including the European societies. The need to rethink and to reconceptualise some of the most widespread assumptions about the foundations of society and the interactions between its members becomes apparent when regarded from these perspectives. One of

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the things that need to be reconsidered is whether the old binary opposition between “us” and “them”—i.e. between settled inhabitants and newcomers, non-migrants and migrants—is still relevant. As the contributions to this themed issue of *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture* demonstrate, there is much to suggest that the affiliations and boundaries between people are constructed differently today.

As Esra Küçük, head of the Gorki Forum at the Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin, has observed, the lines of division and conflict are no longer structured by the previously established distinctions between right and left, migrants and non-migrants, upper class and lower class. Citing examples from contemporary German society, she observes a range of actions and unexpected reactions that do not fit neatly into the outdated categories and clear-cut distinctions between liberals and conservatives. Küçük mentions leftist liberals who want to repeal the right to dual citizenship; a Persian migrant who shot people he thought looked like Turks at a shopping centre in Munich; and a conservative suburban family making sandwiches for refugees at a railway station. The dean of the cathedral in Cologne switches off the exterior lighting during Pegida demonstrations (the islamo- and xenophobic network “Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West”), while Küçük’s Turkish-born taxi driver is afraid that the refugees will put him out of work. As these examples demonstrate, whether somebody has a so-called “migration background” or not does not tell us anything about this person’s political stance or attitude towards nationalism, immigration, and cultural diversity.³ And yet, many researchers, politicians and “ordinary people” continue to use the conventional categories and thus tend to reduce the complexity of socio-cultural relations to a simple binary opposition between a majoritised, allegedly homogeneous “we” and minoritised groups of “different” “others” who ought to be “integrated” into, and acculturated to, the socio-cultural patterns traditionally ascribed to the majority of the society in question. The hegemonic discourses on “integration” thus reconstruct the image of a predominantly Caucasian Europe, which is at odds with the demographic realities of the twenty-first century. As cultural studies scholar Paul Gilroy has stated, it is “necessary to affirm that the peculiar synonymy of the terms ‘European’ and ‘white’ cannot continue”.⁴

In this themed issue, we wish to discuss some of the transformations towards greater cultural diversity and social complexity, and the interconnection of local and national communities with the surrounding world which has been brought about by migration into the Western hemisphere. In line with the overall aims of the *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, the following articles focus on the contributions of artistic

practices, cultural representations, and theory to the debates on topical social and cultural issues. How can art, culture, and theory contribute to a better understanding of these changes? Can they inspire us to imagine the “world” and “society”, or aspects thereof, differently? Further, how can art and culture contribute to the creation of new modes of representation, interaction, and recognition in so-called multicultural or postmigrant societies? How can theory and the arts help us overcome the widespread and often hostile processes of othering and the tendency to pigeonhole “others” which afflict the heterogeneous societies of today? The contributors address questions such as: What role does aesthetic, embodied imagination play in the attempts to overcome binary oppositions and antagonisms in a common worldmaking? How can artistic and cultural figurations and theories of culture and society help us develop multicultural, post-migrant, and cosmopolitan world-views and perspectives? How do contemporary artistic narratives contribute to the “storying” of postmigrant and transcultural belongings, and can they provide us with vantage points from which to consider the mechanisms of othering and racism that can help us overcome the ongoing racialisation of those members of societies who are perceived as “other”? In which ways do cultural institutions address diversity and inclusion in their strategic approaches? Furthermore, how can turning toward culture, the arts, and their institutions deepen our understanding of the tensional and antagonistic struggles for resources, recognition, power, and influence that are also part of culturally diverse societies? Such questions eventually lead to the overall question of how art and culture can contribute to a “reflexive Europeanization”⁵ that acknowledges the decisive role of migration in the history of Europe.

Obviously, art and culture are not the only fields in which such issues are addressed. However, the emphasis on the role of art, culture, and aesthetics in this themed issue springs from the observation that the intensified migration and globalisation that characterise the world today present new challenges to our imagination and representation. Thus, they also challenge the creation of images (in a broad sense), which is essential to both individual and collective worldmaking. As anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has noted:

[E]lectronic mediation and mass migration mark the world of the present not as technically new forces but as ones that seem to impel (and sometimes compel) the work of the imagination. Together, they create specific irregularities because both viewers and images are in simultaneous circulation. Neither images nor viewers fit into circuits or audiences that are easily bound within local, national, or regional spaces.⁶

Appadurai's allusion to the ways in which images themselves are migratory reminds us that images from afar (and the ideas, affects, sentiments, and political convictions they communicate) have become an integral part of local worldmaking practices in what has been termed the postmigrant condition—a key concept in this themed issue, which will be explained below. Many artists, cultural workers, and theorists have long recognised the need to invent new ways of understanding and representing the self, the other, and the (dis)order of the world, and to come up with new “answers” and “images” in the imaginative reconfigurations of existing patterns of thinking and modes of representation—reconfigurations that draw on local, as well as transculturally circulated, sources that “impel ... the work of the imagination”, as Appadurai states. This work has also involved a critical examination and remoulding of the disciplines and institutions that influence individual and collective imaginations and representations, including the disciplines and institutions that underpin culture and the arts.

In the following section, we will substantiate this proposition by examining two historical examples of how cultural representations and institutions have been reconfigured in the wake of immigration, before moving on to some of the key concepts and theoretical discourses central to this themed issue. By way of the two examples from Britain and Germany, we seek to recount a pre-history of the contemporary conditions and recent developments outlined above. Our central focus will not be on the artworks and cultural representations as aesthetic objects, but, rather, on their functions as constitutive components of the wider fabric of ideas, movements and events informing people's perceptions of the world. In addition, these examples will serve as a historical foil for the discussion of contemporary issues and works of art in the subsequent articles.

Multicultural Britain

At least since the late 1990s, the British discourses on art and culture have been marked by a growing attention to the importance of writing the history of so-called “black British” artists and practitioners.⁷ In “Whose heritage? Unsettling ‘the heritage’, re-imagining the post-nation”, Jamaican-born British cultural theorist Stuart Hall considers the concept of “British Heritage” from the perspective of the multicultural Britain that has come into being since the end of World War II. Like heritage, history writing belongs to the selective discursive practices through which “a nation slowly constructs for itself a sort of collective social memory.”⁸ Both history and heritage must be continually reinterpreted and contested in order to reflect the historical, cultural, and

demographic changes of society. With the rise of a politics of recognition alongside the older politics of equality, and with the claim of regaining control over the writing of “one's own story” as part of a more encompassing process of cultural liberalisation, many artists and scholars have dedicated themselves to searching “the archives” to discover overlooked material and silenced histories that could help tell the still missing history of “multicultural Britain.”⁹ Hall convincingly argues that such archival work is of paramount importance to the construction of multicultural societies, because the stakes that “the margins” have in modern society—“the pioneering of a new cosmopolitan, vernacular, post-national, global sensibility”—cannot be properly “heritaged” without some critical records, catalogues, and analyses.¹⁰ Without a historical mapping, their cultural production will be “consigned to the ephemera of its day—expendable.”¹¹

In recent years, artists and scholars have joined forces to write the previously neglected history of the black British arts and culture, especially of the 1980s, to counter “this formidable problem of *not knowing*”, as Eddie Chambers, a protagonist of black British art, has called it.¹² The unifying ambition of those dedicated to writing its history has been to heighten the level of knowledge about the unprecedented abundance of creativity among contemporary practitioners from what the majority referred to as minority communities, which has characterised the decades from the 1980s until today. There are of course “interests” invested in writing such histories of minorities. Thus, art historian Kobena Mercer has cautioned against the “hunger for minority success stories” that motivates institutions with an interest in seeing the issues of race and ethnicity resolved, so that they can be relegated to the past, but which also exists among the minorities who may want their presence in society to be valued and recognised. These inconsistent desires may create a “double-sided pressure” to evaluate the recent past in terms defined by the present, and thus shroud the past in “nostalgia.”¹³ Mercer's word of caution appears in the anthology *Shades of black: Assembling black arts in 1980s Britain*, a seminal example of how such critical (self-)reflection can go hand in hand with theoretically informed historical analysis. As David A. Bailey, Ian Baucom, and Sonia Boyce suggest in their introduction to the book, the 1980s was a crucial historical moment in the cultural history of Britain. The 1980s saw the “the convergence of artistic and political allegiances that paved the way for a generation of ‘raised in Britain’ practitioners and analysts to meet and to name a black British art movement.”¹⁴ However, the three editors hesitate to speak of “a semicoherent arts movement organised under the signs of ‘blackness’ and ‘black Britishness’”. They

argue that this decade should rather be seen as a “historical and conceptual site where a variegated array of artistic practices intersect”.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the 1980s marked a collective change of consciousness.

Eddie Chambers remarks that “black artists” only emerged and were named so in the early 1980s, when the term was introduced as a gesture of self-labelling. Before this time, more specific labels of nationality were commonly used.¹⁶ Black British subjects “came to voice” in a whole range of different media.¹⁷ In the early 1980s, artists such as Sonia Boyce, Keith Piper, and Lubaina Himid ensured that painting was in the forefront of black British art. In the mid-1980s, the rise of independent filmmakers shifted public attention towards film and video, and in the late 1980s the next wave was in the field of photography, which attracted significant attention when Ingrid Pollard, Rotimi Fani-Kayode, and others began to distance themselves from documentary realism. The decade also saw the rise of other forms of agency, especially collectives of artists and filmmakers, including such influential film collectives as the Black Audio Film Collective and Sankofa Film and Video.¹⁸ The Black Arts Movement in the US was a vital source of inspiration for protagonists of the black British art scene, such as Keith Piper and Eddie Chambers. However, it is important to note that although the term “black” is used to signal a political identity in both the US and the UK, “black” in the British context may also designate migrants from the Asian subcontinent, in addition to the African diaspora. This makes the politics and histories of antiracism significantly different on the two sides of the Atlantic. For African Americans, the key issue is slavery and how it has determined daily life in the US, and still does. In Cold War Britain, colonialism became the bigger issue, because a black working population did not settle in Britain in any significant number before the immigration from the Caribbean, the Indian subcontinent, and West Africa in the 1950s and 1960s in the wake of decolonisation.¹⁹ What distinguishes the post-1945 British “blackness” is, therefore, that it is constituted by three overlapping ex-colonial diasporas—the South Asian, the Caribbean, and the African—and the impact of the involvement of “black” immigrants from different regions and cultures with British culture, seen metonymically as European culture.²⁰

As a “movement”, or rather a conjunction of different events, practices, and discourses, black art in Britain was inscribed in a theoretical framework that deviated significantly from the postmodernist and poststructuralist theories that dominated the discussions of vanguard art in the 1980s by coupling these theories with postcolonial perspectives and antiracist agendas. Mercer rightly underscores the importance

of Stuart Hall as the one who “has led the way in terms of providing a theoretical framework that triangulated the artistic and cultural production of black Britain in terms of the three overlapping perspectives of post-colonialism, post-modernism, and post-structuralism.”²¹ Often underscoring the necessity of developing a critical historical account of black British culture, Hall himself contributed to piecing it together in *Shades of black*. Here, Hall subscribed to the widespread understanding of the cultural and artistic production of the 1980s as one that registered not only a generational shift, but also a more encompassing epistemological shift from the anticolonial to the postcolonial, and from universalism to relativism and particularism.²² Hall perceived the black British accomplishments as part of an uneven, contradictory, and contested transformation of cultural life in progress across the world; his emphasis was that the significance of this global transformation derives from more than just the attempt to de-centre Western models by challenging their institutional structures, the established circuits, and the validated canons. More importantly, this transformation could potentially open minds to broader, more transcultural perspectives on local cultural practices and productions. As Hall concluded, black British art and culture are “‘located’ in, without being rendered motionless by, places of origin, skin colour, so-called racial group, ethnic tradition or national belongingness and is part of a new, emergent kind of ‘vernacular cosmopolitanism’”.²³

Postmigrant Germany

In Germany, the interpretation of history and heritage has also played a major role in recent decades. However, compared to the history of black British art and the history of multicultural Britain, the developments in Germany after 1945 were less influenced by the effects of decolonising processes. Although there was some immigration from the former German colonies after 1945, the major debates focused more on the consequences of the approximately four million “guest workers” who immigrated to West Germany between 1955 and 1973, primarily from countries that border the Mediterranean Sea. However, in the political discourses, the effects of the guest worker immigration and the later movements of immigrants into Germany were denied for a long time. Until the end of the twentieth century, it was still common to reject the notion of Germany as a “country of immigration”, and, until the end of the 1990s, major parts of the population insisted—as was the case in other European countries—on the idea that especially migrant labourers were “guests” expected to return to their home country in the near future.²⁴

The long-standing hesitation to recognise immigrants and their descendants as a natural part of German society had an impact on the cultural scene as well. For example, for many years cultural productions by people with what was commonly referred to as a “migration background” were not perceived as a contribution to what was seen as the original German culture. Instead, they were considered as leisure activities for guest workers, or even as a kind of social work unrelated to German culture of that time. As theatre researcher Azadeh Sharifi has pointed out, any potential effort to professionalise cultural activities of guest workers and their descendants were nearly impossible under these conditions. Artists with a “migration background” found it difficult to obtain funding by local municipalities, and the cultural work of guest workers and immigrants evolved almost exclusively at independent cultural institutions or in small and non-commercial publishing houses.²⁵ The history of the post-war guest workers in Germany thus adds to the long history of “suppression of the historical presence of racialised populations” in Germany.²⁶ The hesitation to recognise the overall diversity of the German society is mirrored in struggles to find the right terminology for the cultural contributions of persons with “migration backgrounds”. In the field of literature, for example, not only were the works of the guest workers mainly published at small, independent publishing houses during the 1970s and 1980s, but they were also assigned labels such as “guest worker literature”, “literature of the affected”, “foreigner literature”, “minority literature”, and “migration literature” by critics and scholars.²⁷ Despite the often good intentions of the critics and scholars, using these labels tend to reaffirm the distinction between what is perceived as traditional and homogeneous German culture and the culture of migration; the terms served as “markers of non-Germanness”²⁸ and thus included a “discriminatory function”.²⁹

The ensuing cultural developments throughout the 1990s have to be read against this background. Similar to the developments in the UK, various attempts to reject exclusionary external attributions and to challenge the underlying assumption of a traditional, homogeneous, and “white” normality became visible. Young writers, such as Feridun Zaimoglu, started rejecting the very notion of “migrant literature”, or the “literature of the affected”, and invented gestures of self-labelling, often combined with aggressive attacks on the use of binary distinctions and the prevalent “logic of integration” by mainstream society/the media.³⁰ In artistic-activist networks such as Die Unmündigen and Kanak Attak, established in the 1990s, antiracist agendas were combined with new cultural expressions and theoretical reflections, often inspired by poststructuralist and

postcolonial theory.³¹ Instead of reaffirming the idea that minority cultures ought to be recognised and protected, the overall plurality of life-concepts and backgrounds came into focus.

The widespread attempts to overcome the very distinction between us and them, to reject ascribed identities, and to defend the plurality of lifestyles and backgrounds fostered an inspiring conjunction of artistic, intellectual, and political dimensions, shaping new forms of knowledge production. And those artistic and intellectual movements and networks lay the foundation for the most recent academic debates and cultural developments in the twenty-first century: in the new German film, spearheaded by film director Fatih Akin, transnational aesthetics became influential; in literature, a new style of playful hybridity developed; and, in the performing arts, so-called postmigrant theatre was successfully established by theatre director Shermin Langhoff.³² In such artistic productions and cultural expressions, migration is no longer presented as an exception or a state of emergency, but rather as the normality for contemporary societies.³³ Thus, it is not surprising that the attempts to overcome binary distinctions and to recognise the overall plurality of the German society also include the rediscovery of the multiplicity of German history. Germany’s colonial past is being revisited, and the history of the “guest workers” is seen from other perspectives and as an inherent phase of, and contribution to, German history in the past half century.³⁴ These attempts to acknowledge the fundamental influence of migration on German history, and to demand equal rights and participation, are still controversial. Even in the first years of the twenty-first century, a political and intellectual position exists in which “an essentialised, white, Christian Europe always and necessarily remains the norm”.³⁵ An important question for the present and the future is how countries such as Germany and the UK can retell their own histories without falling back on simple narratives of “us” and “them”, and without excluding huge segments of their respective populations by designating the certain groups as “migrants”, “foreigners”, or “people with a migration background”. We submit that art and culture may play vital roles in this process of writing contemporary European history.

Conceptualising cultural diversity and cosmopolitan relations

As these brief historical accounts suggest, the ever-stronger claims to recognition and equal participation, and the growing realisation that society has become “multicultural” or “postmigrant”, developed rather differently in Germany and Britain. Nevertheless, there are important points of

connection and intersection, especially in the academic debates through which key concepts and theories are shared transnationally. In what follows, we will consider some concepts that have been central to discussions about the transformative impact of globalisation and migration on culture and society. The very concepts of “migration”, and especially “migrant”, are obviously fundamental. In political discourses, these terms may refer to immigrants to a country, or to migrants moving within a country or a political community. Regarding international migration, scholars have observed a dramatic increase of long-term migrants living in countries other than their country of birth. Current international calculations estimate that there are between 200 and 250 million long-term migrants around the world; these figures have prompted sociologist Stephen Castles and political scientist Mark J. Miller to declare this to be the “age of migration”.³⁶ As social anthropologist Stephen Vertovec has noted, contemporary patterns of migration differ considerably from those of the 1980s and early 1990s.³⁷ They are no longer dominated by migration from one specific region or country to another, as more people are now “moving from more places, through more places, to more places”.³⁸ In contemporary globalised migration, a historic two-dimensional pattern of leaving and arriving has become increasingly blurred. Today, “newer, smaller, transient, more socially stratified, less organized and more legally differentiated immigrant groups comprise global migration flows”.³⁹ Partly as a reaction against these new global movements of people, the term “migrant” has become increasingly contested. No longer a purely descriptive term, it is frequently instrumentalised in order to support politically influential distinctions between “migrants” and “refugees”, or between “political migrants” and “economic migrants”, or to continue the separation of “people with migration backgrounds” from the majority. Thus, the term is often mobilised as part of aggressive identity-ascriptions and processes of othering.

Since 2010, the term “postmigration” has started to circulate in German academia as a reaction against this negative, derogative use of the term “migrant” as an external ascription of identity. Shermin Langhoff, who in 2006 came up with the influential label “post-migrant theatre” in Berlin, has even referred to the term as a “political catchword” that is intended to deliberately provoke the widespread public discourses on migration and the common perception of the “migrant” as the “other”.⁴⁰ Similarly, sociologist Erol Yildiz defines the term postmigration as a “political catchword against the ‘migrantisation’ and marginalisation of individuals, who see themselves as an integral part of society”.⁴¹ In this sense, the term does not refer to “a state of ‘afterwards’” primarily

in a temporal sense, but also describes “the re-narration and re-interpretation of the phenomenon ‘migration’ and its consequences”.⁴² Furthermore, in certain fields of the social sciences and humanities, postmigration serves as an analytical term with which to examine the “negotiations and dynamics” unfolding after migration has taken place.⁴³ By doing so, the postmigrant perspective necessarily goes beyond the widespread use of the migratory as a demarcation line and “describes cultural, ethnic, religious and national diversity as normality”.⁴⁴ One of the assets of the term “postmigration” is, therefore, that it helps to direct attention away from “migrants” and “people with a migration background” as objects or subjects of interest, and towards society as a whole. Hence, instead of reaffirming a “migrantology”, in which researchers permanently consolidate their own object of study—the “migrant” as the “other”⁴⁵—the post-migrant perspective seeks to overcome such distinctions and to analyse struggles and conflicts in culturally diverse societies. According to political scientist Naika Foroutan, postmigrant societies should thus be conceived of as “societies of negotiation”, where former dogmas about “integration” are challenged and increasingly replaced by struggles over exclusion and inclusion via the renegotiation of hierarchies and through attempts to develop more inclusive notions of “who we are”. It follows that the term “postmigration” is not purely descriptive. It also includes, Foroutan adds, a normative political vision of “how we want to live together in societies characterised by increasing heterogeneity”.⁴⁶

The novel critical use of the term “postmigration” addresses some of the same questions that have been addressed earlier with reference to the influential but contested notion of multiculturalism, but the concept of postmigration contributes to the discussion from a new angle. Together with the concepts of cosmopolitanism, pluriversality, and conviviality, “multiculturalism” can thus be seen as part of the wider theoretical context from which the discourse on post-migration has sprung. Since the 1970s and 1980s, the term “multiculturalism” has served as an umbrella for numerous policies whose overall goal was “the promotion of tolerance and respect for group identities, particularly of immigrants and ethnic minorities”.⁴⁷ Scholars have typically distinguished between three patterns of multiculturalism: new forms of self-empowerment of indigenous people, forms of autonomy and power-sharing for sub-state national groups, and new forms of “multicultural citizenship”—including constitutional, legislative, or parliamentary affirmation of multiculturalism; funding of ethnic group organizations; etc.⁴⁸ Reports show that, from the 1980s onwards, countries such as the UK and Canada have implemented a vast range of initiatives related to political strategies of enhancing

“multicultural citizenship”, whereas countries such as Germany, Japan, and Denmark have only very slowly, if at all, begun to support this concept.⁴⁹ In recent public debates, one can observe a “turn against multiculturalism” that is partly driven by “fears amongst the majority groups that the accommodation of diversity has gone too far and is threatening their way of life”.⁵⁰ These fears are partly built on beliefs that multiculturalism has failed to address the dimensions of social, economic, and political exclusion, and has thus “failed to help the intended beneficiaries”.⁵¹ This has led some scholars to suggest that we are even living in a “post-multicultural era”.⁵²

In his revaluation of multiculturalism, Will Kymlicka has argued that the common “folkloristic understanding of multiculturalism as uncritical celebration of differences” is based neither on differentiated readings of the theories of multiculturalism, nor on sufficient insight into the actual policies in communities and governments.⁵³ According to Kymlicka, the surprising consensus that we “are indeed in a post-multicultural area”⁵⁴ is thus mainly built on rhetoric, not on reality. He argues that there is still a need for the expansion of multicultural policies globally, as well as a need for answers to contemporary challenges: “Generally accepted values and constitutional norms of tolerance, equality and individual freedom speak for multiculturalism.”⁵⁵

Notwithstanding its enduring relevance, multiculturalism came under increasing criticism in the 1980s and 1990s for being an instrument deployed by state bureaucracies to operationalise diversity and manage minorities within a nation-state. This induced thinkers around the world to introduce other concepts less susceptible to appropriation “from above”, first and foremost new understandings of “cosmopolitanism” and “conviviality”. As cultural theorist Nikos Papastergiadis has noted, the state management of multiculturalism tends to separate debates on multiculturalism from those on cosmopolitanism, although they are in effect co-constitutive: together, they set a new political agenda.⁵⁶ When Stuart Hall noted that black British art and culture of the 1980s were part of an emergent “vernacular cosmopolitanism”, he was implicitly referring to an understanding of cosmopolitanism that was primarily developed in the twenty-first century by scholars from the social sciences and humanities such as Kwame Anthony Appiah, Seyla Benhabib, Mica Nava, Marsha Meskimmon, and Nikos Papastergiadis.⁵⁷ This recent understanding of cosmopolitanism acknowledges the contributions of feminist and postcolonial debates to the conceptualisation of “world citizenship” beyond masculine-normative, Eurocentric frames for understanding. Accordingly, this recent work on cosmopolitanism usually adopts a situated perspective and explores how connections with others are made across and

through differences, whether related to gender and sexuality; to cultural, national, or ethnic affiliations; or to class and economic status.⁵⁸

The surge of interest in cosmopolitanism is linked to the development of a critical understanding of how everyday lives are transformed by the processes and effects of global mobility. Referencing anthropologist Nèstor García Canclini, a forerunner in this field, Papastergiadis emphasises that in contemporary society all people are “to some extent living in a border zone”, translating themselves and negotiating the variegated cultural symbols and meanings of artefacts that circulate across cultural boundaries.⁵⁹ Reservations about cosmopolitanism primarily concern its Eurocentric legacy of universalism that is perceived as ethnically biased and exclusionary. To counter this critique, the recent theories of cosmopolitanism acknowledge that cosmopolitanism must include the ideal of universalism, but that this ideal is always contingent on the specific circumstances, cultural setting, and needs through which this ideal is articulated. Accordingly, they bring attention to the mechanisms of exclusion and particularist perspectives. Decolonial theorist Walter D. Mignolo has, for instance, coined the terms “diversality” and “pluriversality” to signal his ambition to rethink universality through diversity.⁶⁰ To Mignolo, pluriversality is inevitably shaped by the ways in which different colonial histories are entangled with imperial modernity, and “border thinking” is needed to delink from “modern rationality” (i.e., hegemonic Western forms of knowledge) in order to decolonise being and build “other possible worlds”.⁶¹

Mignolo’s understanding of “pluriversality” shows some resemblance to the concept of conviviality proposed by Paul Gilroy in his multidimensional and cosmopolitan analysis of post-World War II Britain. Gilroy argues that the malaise of contemporary multicultural Britain is rooted in postimperial or postcolonial melancholia. Gilroy posits that the response of post-war Britain to imperial decline was a collective loss of memory that manifested itself as an identity crisis and an excessive preoccupation with British heritage, coupled with a nostalgic longing for a society of ethnic and racial homogeneity. For Gilroy, an important aspect of this preoccupation is the construction of World War II as “the last moment of a heroic collective stance prior to a multicultural onslaught that brings fragmentation, disorientation, and chaos in its wake”.⁶² Postcolonial melancholia is thus seen as a breeding ground of populist and vernacular racial discourses that recirculate outdated colonial notions of race and blot out the reprehensible morals and effects of colonialism.

Gilroy joins Stuart Hall in insisting on the need to write postcolonial counter-histories with a transnational perspective, and to learn from them. He chimes

in with the historians of Britain who have argued that, just as Britain reshaped life in colonial sites, the colonies refigured the British domestic sphere⁶³: “Imperial mentalities were brought back home before the immigrants arrived and altered economic, social, and cultural relations in the core of Europe’s colonial systems.”⁶⁴ Gilroy also makes recommendations for a cure against postcolonial melancholia. He puts his faith in “the ordinary multicultural of the postcolonial metropolis”⁶⁵ and points to the “hybrid urban cultures”, “ordinary, spontaneous antiracism”, and “cosmopolitan, creolised history” which are the very cornerstones of a culture of conviviality.⁶⁶ However, as Gilroy considers racism to be the overriding issue of postcolonial Britain, and of “multicultural Europe”,⁶⁷ he does not associate cosmopolitan conviviality with the absence of racism, but with “a different setting” for its structures and interpersonal interactions.⁶⁸ Racism must thus become a “part of the moral landscape through which today’s political processes must move.”⁶⁹

Imagining other worlds: the possibilising force of culture and the arts

Gilroy’s emphasis on hybrid cultures as an enabling force for cosmopolitan conviviality leads us to the question of the role of art. In his book *Cosmopolitanism and culture*, Papastergiadis stresses the importance of contemporary art to a cosmopolitan project, as art can both reflect the process of cosmopolitanisation and take an active part in the articulation of a cosmopolitan ethical agency.⁷⁰ When Papastergiadis finds “the most vivid signs of the aesthetic dimension of the cosmopolitan imaginary ... in the world-making processes of contemporary art”,⁷¹ his understanding is aligned with that of art historian Marsha Meskimmon, who also sees cosmopolitanism as closely related to the fields of aesthetics and art-making, and to the concept of worldmaking.⁷² In his seminal book *Ways of world-making* from 1978, Nelson Goodman explained that worldmaking never begins from nothing: “Worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds already on hand; the making is a remaking.”⁷³ According to Goodman, the building of a world can have many different starting points and evolve on various levels: individual, collective, the world community; or “world” could refer to the “worlds” of arts and science, or to specific disciplines. What unites these very different “worlds” is that they are conceptual and discursive, rather than given concrete realities, even if they always “materialise”. As Jen Webb and Lorraine Webb have argued, all real events, including disasters and the laws of physics, are “predicated on cultural rather than material knowledge: articulated and accounted for by models of

representation”.⁷⁴ Or, in Goodman’s wording, worlds are “built in many ways”.⁷⁵ The exploration of the idea that art has a crucial role to play in worldmaking (as defined by Goodman) was initiated in 2011 by Australian researchers and artists at the conference “The world and world-making in art”, held at The Australian National University in Canberra and later documented in a special issue of *Humanities Research*.⁷⁶ In her contribution to this themed issue, “The precarious ecologies of cosmopolitanism”, Meskimmon argues that works of art are eminently capable of making “worlds” that activate “the ‘possibilising’ force of imagining”.⁷⁷ Following Goodman, and thus countering the ingrained myth of “the New” cultivated by many twentieth-century avant-garde artists, Meskimmon proposes that worldmaking in art is always a re-making: “there is no beyond or outside from which to construct another, different or new world; the new and the different emerge from past and present worlds, re-made, re-seen, re-heard.”⁷⁸ In her article in this issue, Meskimmon moves on to consider how insights into the world-making potential of art and its ability to participate in processes of social change can contribute to rethinking citizenship beyond the nation-state and to developing a more nuanced understanding of citizenship for the postmigrant condition.

Worldmaking (in art) can also manifest as the invention of new forms of being or making oneself at home in the world; i.e., worldmaking is also fundamental to a sense of belonging. Migratory living makes the complexities of belonging particularly pronounced. Several scholars from the humanities and social sciences have argued that displacement, disjuncture, dialogism, hybridisation, and belonging are basic conditions of migrant subjectivity. By highlighting acts of “homing”,⁷⁹ “regrounding”,⁸⁰ and “togetherness-in-difference”,⁸¹ scholars such as Ien Ang, Avtar Brah, and Mimi Sheller have called attention to the complex and dynamic interplay between travel and dwelling, home and not-home.⁸² In *Narratives for a new belonging: diasporic cultural fictions*, cultural studies scholar Roger Bromley has asserted that belonging is fundamental to identity formation, and that cultural fictions like those found in literature have the potential to generate narratives for a new, hybrid belonging. Bromley also suggests that “the dialectics of belonging and not belonging” shape the identities and agency of migrants and their descendants in ways that contest the locally available models and open up the possibilities of new affiliations.⁸³

The contributors to this issue of *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture* all engage in different ways with some of the concepts and issues introduced above. In “A bricolage of identifications: storying postmigrant belonging”, Roger Bromley reconsiders the issue of belonging

from a postmigrant perspective and reflects on what the differences might be between migrant, or diasporic, and postmigrant representational practices. He suggests that the latter are in some ways linked to the concept of diaspora, but also detached from it, insofar as postmigrant narratives emphasise “a present and future trajectory rather than anchorage in an ‘originary’ culture. They may start out from a ‘minority’ position, but develop within new fields of reference to a point of being part of, for example, British culture, or of national/global discourse.” The question of belonging with others in the world is also central to the discourse on multiculturalism and the question of which individuals and groups should be recognised as belonging to society. In “Does philosophy contribute to an invasion complex? Sloterdijk the antagonist and the agonism of Mouffe”, Nikos Papastergiadis interrogates the philosophical foundation of the polarised debate on such issues. Taking the present gulf between the political backlash against multiculturalism and the convivial multiculturalism of everyday life in Australia as his point of departure, Papastergiadis engages with Peter Sloterdijk’s and Chantal Mouffe’s writings to critically evaluate the moral panic over cultural differences and the complicity of philosophical frameworks in justifying negative attitudes towards migrants and refugees. Like Papastergiadis, Marsha Meskimmon turns to cosmopolitanism for an alternative vision of plural society as founded in human connectedness, responsible intersubjective agency, and open processes of cross-cultural exchange. In her article “From the cosmos to the polis: on denizens, art and postmigration world-making”, Meskimmon combines insights from feminist corporeal-materialism and a decolonising approach with insights gleaned from close readings of artworks to develop a theory of the denizen as a figuration or an alternative means of envisioning “citizenship” as an active mode of worldmaking—an imaginative way of making oneself at home everywhere by materialising “creative ecologies of belonging”.

As Meskimmon points out, a contemporary grounded cosmopolitanism “that stresses the significance of embodied, responsible, and intersubjective agency as the basis of an ethical world-making project” resonates particularly well with the concept of postmigration, which likewise emphasises local anchoring and struggles, materially situated processes and embodied intersubjective exchanges across differences. Such an understanding of postmigration is at the core of cultural anthropologist Regina Römhild’s, German studies scholar Lizzy Stewart’s, and cultural studies scholar Sabrina Vitting-Seerup’s contributions. In “Working Towards diversity—representation of ethnic minorities in Danish cultural institutions”, Vitting-Seerup analyses the Danish cultural policies and patterns of exclusion through a postmigratory lens. She proposes two sets of distinctions that will make it

easier for professionals in cultural institutions, as well as researchers examining institutional policies, to see where one can potentially achieve the greatest improvement towards increasing diversity in cultural institutions: first, she presents a model of four levels for potential positioning of diverse representation in cultural institutions (*on stage*, *behind stage*, *off stage*, *above stage*), and then a distinction between the problems of *access* and *depiction*. By providing analytical distinctions, Vitting-Seerup’s contribution offers useful methodological instruments for working with diverse representation in a postmigrant society.

Stewart is also concerned with issues of exclusion and representation. In “Postmigrant theatre: the Ballhaus Naunynstraße takes on sexual nationalism”, she explores the “postmigrant theatre” of the Ballhaus Naunynstraße in Berlin-Kreuzberg; in particular, the theatre’s critical engagement with the widespread racialisation of sexuality in public discourse. In her readings of Nurkan Erpulat’s plays *Jenseits: Bist du schwul oder bist du Türke* (*On the other side: are you gay or are you Turkish?* 2008) and *Verrücktes Blut* (*Crazy blood*, 2010), Stewart focuses on the tropes of “striptease” and “disciplinary stripping”. Following the observations of Karin Sieg and others, she reads these tropes as a “dominant gesture or even *gestus* in the theatre’s repertoire”, and as a criticism of sexual nationalism. In the concluding contribution to this themed issue, Regina Römhild critically considers the recent research on migration and culture. In “Beyond the bounds of the ethnic: for a postmigrant cultural and social research” (translated from German for this issue), she advocates a new perspective for future research on migration and postmigration. Much of the current research is still conducted as research on “migration” and “migrants”, and, as explained above, tends to reaffirm the underlying distinction between “us” and “them”. Römhild thus makes a strong case for a postmigratory approach that adopts migration as a perspective instead of seeing migration and the migrant as the object of study. The way forward is, Römhild argues, to *demigrantize* the current research on migration, and at the same time *migrantize* research on society and culture at large.

This selection of contributions examines various contemporary challenges to imagination and representation in the age of globalisation: the need for a new cosmopolitanism, emerging narratives of postmigrant belonging, different practices of worldmaking, challenges for cultural institutions, and the complexities of recent developments within European societies. These narratives are united by a common attempt to overcome prevalent antagonisms and to examine strategies and concepts for a more inclusive world, built on the acknowledgment of the diversity and complex coexistence of people in contemporary societies.

Notes

1. Castles and Miller, *The Age of Migration*. We thank our anonymous peer reviewers for their helpful comments to the first version of this introduction.
2. Juneja, "Circulation and Beyond—the Trajectories of Vision," 59.
3. Küçük, "Vom Mut, Keine Angst Zu Haben" (*Zeit Online*, September 9, 2016), <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/2016-09/integration-fluechtlinge-deutschland-demokratie-minderheiten-fluechtlingspolitik> (accessed October 11, 2016).
4. Gilroy, *After Empire*, 155.
5. Appadurai, "Thinking about 'Reflexive Europeanization,'" workshop of the Research Laboratory Critical Europeanization Research, held on October 26, 2016, at the Humboldt University Berlin, Department of European Ethnology.
6. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 4.
7. Bailey et al., "Shades of Black," xi.
8. Hall, "Whose Heritage? Un-Settling 'the Heritage,'" 74.
9. Ibid., 77–8.
10. Ibid., 81, 83.
11. Ibid., 83.
12. Chambers, *Black Artists in British Art*, 2.
13. Mercer, "Iconography after Identity," 51.
14. Bailey et al., "Shades of Black," xiii.
15. Ibid., xiv.
16. Chambers, *Black Artists in British Art*, 1–4.
17. Mercer, "Iconography after Identity," 49.
18. Ibid., 49–50.
19. Hall, "Assembling the 1980s," 3.
20. Mercer, "Iconography after Identity," 53; "Diaspora Didn't Happen in a Day," 74.
21. Mercer, "Diaspora Didn't Happen in a Day," 75.
22. Hall, "Assembling the 1980s," 8.
23. Ibid., 2.
24. See in detail: Bade, *Kritik und Gewalt*, 17–40.
25. Sharifi, "Postmigrantisches Theater," 35–45; Sappelt, "Theater und Migrant/Innen," 275–93.
26. El-Tayeb, *Undeutsch. Die Konstruktion des Anderen*, 15.
27. cf. Ernst, *Literatur und Subversion*, 288.
28. Ibid., 286.
29. Ibid., 293.
30. Cf. Terkessidis, *Interkultur*, 39–75.
31. El-Tayeb, "Kanak Attak! Hip Hop und (Anti-) Identitätsmodelle," 97.
32. Sharifi, "Postmigrantisches Theater."
33. Heidenreich, *V/Erkennungsdienste, das Kino und die Perspektive der Migration*, 297.
34. See, e.g.: *Black Berlin. Die deutsche Metropole*.
35. El Tayeb, *Undeutsch*, 19.
36. Castles and Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 1.
37. Vertovec, "Towards Post-Multiculturalism?" 86.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Langhoff, "Im Feld der Verhandlung," 12–17.
41. Yildiz, "Postmigrantische Perspektiven," 22.
42. Yildiz, *Die weltoffene Stadt*, 177.
43. Foroutan, "Postmigrantische Gesellschaft," 248.
44. Canan and Foroutan, *Deutschland postmigrantisch III*, 15.
45. Römhild, "Jenseits ethnischer Grenzen," 39. See also the translation into English in this issue of *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*.
46. Foroutan, "Postmigrantische Gesellschaft," 248.
47. Vertovec, "Towards Post-Multiculturalism?" 83.
48. Kymlicka, "The Rise and Fall of Multiculturalism," 101.
49. Cf. Kymlicka, "Multikulturalismus: Erfolg, Scheitern und Perspektiven," 145.
50. Kymlicka, "The Rise and Fall of Multiculturalism," 97.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Kymlicka, "Multikulturalismus: Erfolg, Scheitern und Perspektiven," 160.
54. Kymlicka "The Rise and Fall of Multiculturalism," 97.
55. Kymlicka "Multikulturalismus: Erfolg, Scheitern und Perspektiven," 167.
56. Papastergiadis, *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*, 197.
57. Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*; Benhabib, "Another Cosmopolitanism."; Nava, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism*; Meskimmon, *Contemporary Art and the Cosmopolitan Imagination*; Papastergiadis, *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*.
58. Meskimmon, "The Precarious Ecologies of Cosmopolitanism," 38.
59. Papastergiadis, *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*, 85.
60. Ibid., 87; Mignolo, "The Many Faces of Cosmopolis."; "Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity."
61. Mignolo, "Delinking," 498.
62. Dworkin, "Paul Gilroy and the Cultural Politics of Decline," 533.
63. Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* 155; Dworkin, "Paul Gilroy and the Cultural Politics of Decline," 533.
64. Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* 164.
65. Ibid., 136.
66. Ibid., 153, 161.
67. Ibid., 161, 165.
68. Ibid., xi.
69. Ibid., 166.
70. Papastergiadis, *Cosmopolitanism and Culture*, 102.
71. Ibid., 90.
72. Meskimmon, "The Precarious Ecologies of Cosmopolitanism," 39; *Contemporary Art and the Cosmopolitan Imagination*. See also Meskimmon's contribution to this special issue.
73. Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, 6.
74. Webb and Webb, "Making Worlds: Art, Words and Worlds," 64.
75. Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, 5.
76. The idea was later explored more fully in Turner and Webb, *Art and Human Rights*.
77. Meskimmon, "The Precarious Ecologies of Cosmopolitanism," 40.
78. Ibid., 37.
79. Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*.
80. Ahmed et al., "Introduction: Uprootings/Regroundings."
81. Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese*.
82. Sheller and Urry, "The New Mobilities Paradigm," 211.
83. Bromley, *Narratives for a New Belonging*, 121.

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